

VISION 2020 UPDATE

June 24, 2013

Summary of Process

Last October, Elizabeth City Mayor Joe Peel invited area business, community and faith-based leaders to Christ Episcopal Church to talk about ways to grow the area's economy, create new jobs and build a stronger community in Elizabeth City by the year 2020. A little more than eight months later, Vision 2020 is coming into focus.

"This is a critically important strategic planning process that is bringing together hundreds of citizens to identify areas we need to improve in order for us to become more competitive as a community," said Peel, who co-chairs Vision 2020 with the Rev. Ernest Sutton of Faithway Apostolic Church.

During the Vision 2020 steering committee meetings a SWOT analysis of Elizabeth City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was conducted; a vision statement that positions Elizabeth City as the "Harbor of Opportunity," as well as the "Harbor of Hospitality®" was drafted; and nine critical success factors within the areas of economic development and community development were identified to help the area thrive. These include:

Economic Development Success Factors

- Improving K-12 education
- Enhancing the waterfront
- Developing a more vibrant downtown
- Improving the business/developer climate in the city and county by streamlining licensing and startup processes
- Strengthening ties with and building ongoing, positive relationships with state leadership, the Port of Virginia and area economic development efforts

Community Development Success Factors

- Championing the region’s diversity and heritage by creating a dynamic partnership among all citizens
- Improving and supporting strong family structures
- Improving day care for infants and children through age 5 and Pre-K opportunities
- Comprehensive job and entrepreneur training for youth

At the January meeting, the co-chairs called for the formation of “action teams,” to be represented by a broad spectrum of residents, for addressing each of the nine critical success factors. The teams, consisting of 10-12 people each, were tasked with developing measurable goals and recommendations for what can be accomplished over the next five-to-seven years in their assigned areas. These teams began their work towards the end of January and seven are still working.

Economic Development Action Team Members

K-12 Education	Waterfront	Downtown	Business Climate	Economic Development
Joe Peel	Peter Thomson	Debbie Malenfant	David Harris	Stan Walz
Virginia Houston	Simone Cooper	Morrie Tharps	Alex Rich	Jeff Dixon
Barry Overman	Pauline Berard	Ray Donnelly	Doris Johnson	Jan Robinson
Glenda Griffin	Steve Atkinson	Arthur McPherson	Erica Ramjohn	Anthony Sharp
Joe Winslow	George Thomas	Ed Fearing	Matt Wood	Anita Hummer
Walter Smith	Joe Jenkins	Birt Birdsall	Phil Johnson	Kandi Dietemeyer
Russ Hull	John Bell	Vidal Falcon	Jean Baker	Cecil Perry
Pam Pereza	Charlotte Underwood	Freda Smith	Don Davis	Ernest Sutton

Tony Flach	Bobby Vaughn	Glover Shannon	Diana Gallop	Kelly Thorsby
Yvonne Walton	Billie Caudle	Amy Finn	Billie Reid	Clay Perkins
Nava Coppin	Lucy Gordon	Spiros Giannakopoulos	Alvin McPherson	Rocky Lane
Master Chief Brett Wickett				
Dr. Sheila Williams				

Update of Economic Development Teams' Work

K-12 Education Team Report–

This team has had several meetings and decided it needed broader input into its process of making recommendations for our schools. The team subsequently conducted two focus groups with just over 100 community participants. The Team then developed a survey to gather the same data from additional people and placed the survey online for a period of two weeks. The team engaged the public in discussing the following questions:

1. What purposes should public schools serve? Why invest in public education in our county or city?
2. What role should public schools play in our children's lives and in our community?
3. What are the characteristics of an outstanding public school or school district?

Since the online survey has been taken down several weeks ago, members of the team have been hard at work pulling the data together. The responses to question three will be used at the team's next meeting on June 28th to build a rubric of a quality school district. The team's plan is to then put this rubric online and ask the public to rate our school district against the rubric. These responses will enable the team to identify areas of focus for their recommendations to the school board.

Waterfront Team Report –

MISSION: To Make Recommendations that use our waterfront to help bring prosperity to Elizabeth City

The team has considered the re-development of the Shipyard Properties consisting of:
The Elizabeth City Shipyard,
The COA properties
The Riverside Shipyard
The Redding parcel
The “Yacht Club” property.

There was general agreement on the following points:

- 1) Presently available grants did not allow the City of Elizabeth City to purchase these properties.
- 2) Because of the presence of COA and the symbiotic relationships with City owned property nearby, whatever development occurred would occur with some form of public/private partnership.
- 3) Expertise in Marine Management was needed in order to advise the committee on present Marine/Marina trends and costs
- 4) Any major housing associated with re-development would have to take place on the South side of Riverside Drive
- 5) The Chairman was tasked with looking into the possibility of an expert assessment of the property, potentially paid for by Committee of 100.

Development was divided into seven general sections:

- 1) Public Access
- 2) Business Mix
- 3) Co-joining properties
- 4) Housing
- 5) Storms
- 6) Competition
- 7) Marine Expertise

Access

- 1) Ideally there would be boardwalk access entering the property at Charles St. Bridge and going right to the Moncla end of the property
- 2) Alternately A boardwalk through the Riverside/COA properties and
- 3) Public access at the foot of the intersecting streets (historically correct)

Business Mix

The committee foresaw a mix of the following:

- 1) Bar Restaurant (possibly a rehab of the present COA building)
- 2) Marine Repair shops
- 3) Boat Rental
- 4) Boating Supply store
- 5) Fuel
- 6) Pump-out

7) Working Boatyard

Housing

Because of the basic width of 109 ft: necessary municipal set-backs from Riverside and CAMA set-backs from the river, and the potential brown field problems at the center of the property, housing possibilities are limited. While custom developments are possible, the committee agreed that it would be more doable to purchase property (some of it distressed) on the South Side of Riverside Avenue and have more park land on the water side.

Storms

It was agreed that major marina development is contingent upon attracting out-of-area boaters to Elizabeth City. A major concern of absentee boaters is what to do in the case of named storms. At the present time many area docks require boaters to remove their boats in the case of named storms. The committee discussed the potential of working with the City of Elizabeth City to use Waterfront Park for Storage (on cradles) during named storms. This would seem to strengthen the concept of a public/private entity.

Competition

In order to make the Marina development successful owners from Virginia and elsewhere in North Carolina have to be persuaded that Elizabeth City is the correct place to lodge their boats. In the off season larger boats need to winter in Elizabeth City and provide work for our citizens. The committee agreed that there would have to be a needed mix of expertise and amenities to attract this group.

Marine Expertise

The chairman was tasked with getting more information about what it would take to make development feasible. He approached the Committee of 100 with a request of funding of a short feasibility study by a qualified expert. This money was received and the study is underway.

Downtown Team Report –

The Downtown Action Team has meet numerous times and is working toward formulating a plan for making downtown more active and vibrant. Initial meetings centered on information collection and analysis, as well as familiarizing members of the group with past and current real estate trends in the downtown area.

Two community webinars were conducted – “Critical Mass is Not Just a Religious Experience” and “The Step-by-Step Guide to Community Branding.” Both of these webinars were very well attended by the committee, as well as members of the business community, residential community, real estate community, and planning and other city staff.

Roger Brooks is one of North America’s most sought after experts in the creation of great destinations. The information provided by Mr. Brooks in the above webinars (and other resource materials) will serve as a planning outline to help us finalize a plan of action specific to downtown Elizabeth City.

One of our first big tasks is to conduct a short community survey to collect information about what residents’ perceptions are about our downtown, why they shop (or don’t

shop) in downtown, and what it would take to get them to shop, dine, live, or own businesses downtown. We will target the entire community with this survey; however, we will also reach out to the students and faculties at each of our colleges/universities to determine how best to encourage an ongoing interaction between them and our downtown businesses. To that end, we have developed a working relationship with the Small Business & Technology Center at ECSU and will be working with student interns to help us with this project.

Business Climate Report –

The Business Climate Committee respectfully submits the following recommendations for Vision 2020. The recommendations have been grouped into five areas. The committee believes all of the recommendations are important for a positive experience for businesses in Elizabeth City.

1. Business Environment and Attitude

- A “team approach” by all City departments to help the business owner and the contractors representing those owners. Currently there is not a “team” approach.
- “Customer Service” is the key approach today to improve the image of the City and to develop a positive business climate.
- Customer Service requires identifying the right people for the work being performed by matching their talents and personalities with the job. (in the committee’s discussions there were examples given of problems experienced with current policies and in cases the employees)

2. Internal Policies and Structures / Administrative Issues

- Business license and permit applications should be available every day of the week. Currently business license applications are only handled on Fridays of each week, which can delay the business owner resulting in both lost time and additional costs.
- Recommend one person in the city offices to be the primary contact for coordinating and processing business license applications. A business license can require from 3 to 9 permits to be obtained before the license is issued. The primary contact person would be most helpful to the business owner in the license approval process.
- Recommend a “resource person or persons” be identified in the city for business owners, contractors, developers and engineers to go to for clarification when problems arise in the middle of the application process. Note – the City Manager mentioned that a key person for the pre-application process is being considered. This person could address issues before the final plans are prepared and submitted to the City, which can be at a considerable savings for the business owner. Examples:

After plans have been submitted to the City and are in the approval process, changes may be required and the business owner is then required to have another 20 copies of revised plans re-submitted. That is both time consuming and costly.

- a). Currently the Technical Review Committee for the City requires 20 complete sets of plans for distribution to departments etc. Those plans most often have multiple pages of survey and engineering drawings and data. The process should be redesigned to not require a complete set of plans for every department or agency since all of the plan designs / pages are not required for their review and approval.
- The Small Business deposit schedule needs to be reviewed. Some small business deposit amounts are much higher than the business has in actual bills. The higher deposit takes money / cash out of the small business that is needed for its operations and cash flow needs.
 - Recommend one submission point for all applications, including building permits, business licenses, zoning request, utilities installation etc. After submission the application(s) would be routed automatically to all of the applicable departments for their processing. After the departments have processed the application(s) they would be sent back to the submission point. (Note – the City Manager reported that this recommendation will require new software to implement because the current software cannot accommodate it).
 - Recommend the city staff provide reference information to applicants on required State permits with the contact information. This information would be beneficial for new development projects. Make certain the applicant understands the possible delay for city approvals that can result from waiting on the required State agencies approvals.
 - Recommend one web page that lists all fees for permits and licenses so applicants can see the costs that will apply to them, such as zoning applications, utility deposits, building permits and inspection fees, impact fees etc. For fees that are determined by the size or type of project / business provide a fee range, cost per square foot, etc. when possible.
 - Recommend a chart or flow graph on the city web site that shows the order in which permit approvals are required to be obtained; include the minimum, and where possible the maximum, time frame for the different approvals and the responsible city departments. The chart should be in format to allow it to be printed.

3. Technology and the Web Site

- Recommend a “single payment” capability for the electrical department and for permit fees.
 - a). The electrical department should have the ability to take one check for multiple accounts when those accounts are all in one business name, and needs to improve the method for the transfer of credits from one account to another account when they are in the same business name / ownership.
 - b). Recommend the fees for permit applications for the different departments be combined as much as possible to allow for one check to be written as payment instead of the multiple checks required now; the current payment structure also requires the applicant to go to different department locations to make those payments.

Technology / Web Site Continued

- The City Manager reported that possibly as early as May 2013 there will be online access to building permits to allow applicants to check the status of the various required inspections. Recommend that if not a part of that on line access as now planned, that included in the on line information for building permits should be an area for comments and violations found the inspectors which will also serve as documentation for all parties.
- Recommend that the on line access in the above bullet point for building permits be expanded to have the same on line access and information for all other permits and licenses.
- The current city web site has marketing tools available now. It is recommended that the web site be improved by adding clear and easily visible directions for both new and existing businesses to show what is required for permits and licenses including contact information, directions and department locations.
- Recommend on line applications be included when new computer software is purchased to allow capability to access forms for permits and licenses on line. This would include the ability to print the forms or complete the forms on line; provide instructions for the forms and city contact information for assistance. This added capability will eliminate the current requirement of often multiple trips to the city offices to pick up the forms and would save time and money.

4. Information Gathering / Surveys

- Recommend that an on line “exit” survey for business owners, developers, and contractors be developed. The survey would be voluntary for its submission and would allow the experience with individual departments to be expressed by the business owner, developer or contractor for both positive and negative experiences. Possibly two separate surveys would be needed – one for the business owner and one for contractors because of the differences in the relationships with the city departments. The survey results would be monitored by the City Manager and a quarterly or semi-annual summary report on both positive and negative experiences provided to the City Council.
- Recommend possibly working with the Chamber of Commerce to have a short on line survey for its members to identify issues and experiences with the city for permits and license. The city could develop the survey, have the Chamber publicize it in its newsletter and make its completion available on line on the Chamber web site. Over time the survey results could be used by the City Manager and the City Council to identify the positive strengths and the areas that need improvement.
- Recommend over time contacting other municipal governments in N. C. the process or methods they use for permits and business license as covered in the recommendations by this committee.

5. Resources and Partnerships

- Recommend investigating more involvement by the Economic Development Office as an advocate for new and existing businesses. The EDC could make contacts and be a resource for information on the permits and licenses required. Reference the EDC office on the city web site as a source of assistance.
- Use as a referral source for individuals River City Community Development Corp. for individuals who have ideas on starting a small business but need help in how to start or approach the process. This would be well in advance of any applications for license or permits.
- Recommend the coordination of the city and the county planning offices. In the future consideration should be given to a single joint city and county web site that would have such features as entry on line of an address or street / road name that would reference either the city or county for the required permit and / or license. This would clear up the confusion on which is the appropriate unit of government for the business to contact.
- Until the above bullet point can be implemented, recommend that the current city and county web sites have referral links with information that will direct the business to the appropriate government site for applications for permits and licenses.

Economic Development Report

The team has met numerous times over the last months and has explored many options. The team has utilized Vector's software for brainstorming ideas and below are listed several areas under consideration and a rubric for guiding the team's thinking.

Project Overview

Discussed Potential project ideas reviewed in Think-Tank and strategic thinking behaviors, referenced from "Thinking, fast and slow" by, Daniel Kahneman.

Objectives/Goals

- Business Development
- Economic Stimulation

Discussion Items

- **Thinking strategies**, how to look beyond, WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) and WYSIATI (What You See Is All There Is)
- **Airpark**, remove from master list as it has a life of its own
- **Health Care**, on hold until hospital is able to name provider
- **Port of VA**, likely next candidate for review
- **Local Boat Building and Work Boats**, could potentially drive in major jobs and substantial economic growth

What

Project:

Local boat building and work boats

What We Get	When/How Soon?	% Probability of Success	Cost/How Much?	Who is the Champion?
<u>JOBS!!!</u>				
Short Term <u>50-100</u>		<25% will increase after research complete	% Not Much!	Should be a part time business development player
Long Term <u>500+</u>	1-2 years*	after 6 mons of research if success rate is not 50% or more, dump idea	Low Risk	
	5-10 years		Low Cost Idea	

* to lay the ground work and set-up a company, ideally 18 mons

Project Plan/Timeline

- Wayne Harris to research local boat building and work boats project through various resources and bring findings back to next meeting.

Questions/Concerns Addendum

- Q.** Would there be a new business created or would we work with an established company to setup shop here in Elizabeth City to create jobs locally?
A. Both ideas could be pursued. New businesses could start out with grant funding if available and become a Center or Excellence on the front-end and established businesses knowing the art of boat building could evolve more quickly.
- Q.** What are the incentives to setup shop here in Elizabeth City to create jobs locally?
A. The Coast Guard Base and our natural water source
- Q.** What are the opportunities for business?
A. Possibly receiving federal funding / grants, become a *Center of Excellence*
- Q.** Where do we start to research this?
A.
- Q.** How do we get to that end result?

Community Development Teams

Championing Diversity	Building Strong Families	0-5 & Pre-K Opportunities	Youth Job & Entrepreneur Training
Hezekiah Brown	Gwen Sanders	Denauvo Robinson	Lenora Mackey
George Bright	Kathy Ford	Gannell Sutton	Lena Council
Demetrius Stokley	Dana Boslau	Don McCabe	Amber Simons
Kurt Hunsberger	Lena Hill Lawrence	Susan Buckner	Suzanne Rohrbaugh
Phil Donahue	Gus Smith	Robin Zinsmeister	Frances Long
Jackie Latson	Pat Youngblood	Angela Charlton	Joan Ellis
Erin Nixon	Phil Dowdy	Francis Mercer	Wade Denney
Maureen Donnelly	Tony Hornthal	Dr. Spellman	Andy Montero
Ann Hoffman	Tony Stimatz	Bev. Mercer	Morris Autry
Mary Walker	Maria Pharr	Cora Wilson	Shiela VanKeuren
Jannety Mosley			Angie Wills

Championing Diversity Report

Over a period of many weeks, a large group of volunteers worked to come up with core issues that deserve more attention regarding diversity in our community.

Our committee is made up of approximately 10 individuals representing different races, age, genders and more. The group name almost says it all....CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY. And for more than 3 months we have been seeking methods to increase awareness of and appreciation for the vast diversity that exist among the individuals who call Elizabeth City home.

Before preparing a final report, the Committee wants to take one extra step by reaching out to the general public for input and ideas.

Therefore, on Tuesday June 25, 2013, our committee will meet with a cross section of citizens who are willing to give us 45 minutes of their time and assist us in exploring three areas:

1. What are some of the obstacles to creating a more unified and cohesive sense of community in Elizabeth City?
2. What kind of discrimination (if any) have you witnessed or experienced personally?
3. What kind of things can the City of Elizabeth City be doing to foster understanding among the diverse population that make up our City?

We have planned three 45 minutes sessions with different groups beginning at 6:00 p.m. on June 25, 2013 at the Education Center at Albemarle Hospital Educational Center. At the conclusion of this meeting, we will be in a better position to put together a final recommendation.

Building Strong Families Report

The committee has met on five occasions. The initial discussions included thoughts on the definition of “a strong family.” While the responses included some overlap, the committee decided that it was important to seek that definition from other sources; particularly those families experiencing multiple challenges. After much discussion, the committee decided that a survey sampling of citizens in Elizabeth City would be a method to gather this data. The survey would not only allow the committee to identify those components of a strong family as defined by those surveyed, but also determine what services would contribute to building strong families, based on response. Furthermore, the survey would be designed to enhance awareness of existing services that they may not be utilizing which might positively impact the family environment.

The committee has discussed who the survey sample should be and locations. Ideas included the Health Department and Social Services, churches and schools. Listed below is the survey that will be reviewed by the committee at the next meeting (June 25 at 4:30 pm).

Building Strong Families in Elizabeth City

This survey is intended to gain information about the perceived strength of families in our area.

Your response is greatly appreciated.

1. Which neighborhood/area of Elizabeth City do you live?

2. How would you define a “strong family”? What are the characteristics of such a family?

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the strength of your own family? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the strength of your family compared to other families in your neighborhood?

1 2 3 4 5

5. What might help you improve the strength of your family?

6. Which of the following types of services available in our community do you currently use? (Please check all that apply)

Community Service	USE	DO NOT USE	NOT AWARE OF
Preschool Programs (e.g., Head Start, NCPre-K)			
Childcare (e.g., childcare subsidies)			
Support for children with special needs (e.g., Support groups, advocacy, in-home care)			
Fatherhood Resources (e.g., Fathers in Focus)			
Resource Lending Library (located in Smart Start)			
Housing Assistance			
Employment Services (e.g., JobLink)			
Crisis Centers (e.g., Albemarle Hopeline, Albemarle Center, Red Cross, Homeless Shelters)			
Parenting Programs (e.g., Parents as Teachers)			
Food Pantries			
Community Service	USE	DO NOT USE	NOT AWARE OF
Dept of Social Services (e.g., Energy Assistance, Food and Nutrition Services, Work First Cash Assistance, Medicaid)			
Child Support and Legal Assistance (e.g., NC Child Support Enforcement, Legal Services of Coastal Plain)			
Health Support Services (e.g., Dental Health, WIC, Maternal Health, Women's Preventive Health)			
Mental Health Care Services			
Alcoholics Anonymous			
Narcotics Anonymous			
Parks and Recreation (e.g., Baxter Street Park, Charles Creek Park, Waterfront, etc.)			

7. What kind of services would you like to see made available in our community (e.g., 24-hour daycare, information hotline, parenting classes/support)?

8. Additional thoughts and comments:

0-5 and Pre-K Opportunities Report

The Vision 20/20 Early Childhood Committee has officially met two times. We have had individual conversations with committee members as we continue to achieve our goal.

As a committee we decided to identify city and county playgrounds. We believe that play and exercise are important for children and families. It is something that families can do together that has significant positive physical and mental benefits. It also is cost effective.

We feel that it is important to have developmentally appropriate playground facilities. Our deliverable will be maps that will identify the different playgrounds in Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County. Copies of these maps can be placed at the Chamber, AOA, businesses, Doctor's offices, Tourism office and other selected places. Our goal is to complete this task by the end July.

Youth, Job and Entrepreneur Training Report

Late March and early April the 20/20 Vision Committee on Youth met several times to discuss ways to address the Youth Focus and priorities. A grant opportunity was presented in March for the committee to decide whether or not we would pursue. After several meetings, the Mayor was invited in to discuss the grant opportunity with the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, under their New Generations Initiative.

The committee along with the Mayor agreed to move forward with the submission of the proposal to the Rural Center. The entire committee participated in the development of the proposal including one youth. It was submitted on April 16, 2013. Grant proposal is pending.

New Generation Leaders helps young rural leaders become more active in civic and economic affairs, in part through engagement in a group community improvement project.

The grant requires the creation of an action team comprised of young people ages 16 to 30 to work together to 1) design and implement a community improvement project and 2) develop recommendations for how their communities can become a more attractive and welcoming place for youth and young adults. During this yearlong process, the teams become immersed in their community's history, culture and economy while engaging with the larger community in discussions and activities.

Each action team is composed of approximately 25 youth or young adults, and solicits input from at least 100 additional young people in the community. The team also represents the diversity of the local communities.

Grants require collaboration by local organizations. Each grant is worth \$20,000.